

Electronic Kiosks Debut

As increasing numbers of Californians find it necessary to navigate the judicial system without representation, courts are providing new services to assist them. The Superior Court of Orange County has taken a giant step toward meeting the needs of pro per litigants by installing electronic kiosks with information on legal services.

Unveiled on November 17, 2000, in the family law information center at the Lamoreaux Justice Center in the city of Orange, the Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN) system provides the latest in self-help legal information to Orange County residents. I-CAN is one of the nation's first computer modules with an electronic touch screen and a keyboard that guides users through the process of filling out and filing legal forms.

The I-CAN kiosks, which can be used free of charge, familiarize users with the court system through interactive video tours that describe court hearings. For now, the system includes instructions for filing paternity and small claims forms and temporary restraining orders in domestic violence cases. In the future, the court plans to offer unlawful detainer and landlord-tenant information, eviction defense forms, and electronic forwarding of completed forms to the court for filing. In addition, the kiosks provide their services in Spanish and have phones that connect users to an information hotline.

"The I-CAN project is not one that the court has developed on its own," says Alan Slater, Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Orange County. "It has brought together a number of parties, all with the goal of increasing public access to the courts."

The I-CAN system was developed through a partnership of the Superior Court of Orange County and the Legal Aid Society of Orange County and is funded through model project grants from the Legal Services Corporation, the State Bar of California, the Judicial Council of California, and the Family Law Facilitators Program.

The Orange County court anticipates that in the near future kiosks will be available at the Legal Aid Society office in Santa Ana, at the superior court's justice center locations, and at libraries in San Juan Capistrano, Fullerton, and Irvine.

"We've had good responses so far, as kiosk users are pleased with the system," adds Mr. Slater. "We eventually plan on installing kiosks in all of the county's courthouses and libraries. We would also like to expand the system's capabilities to include case information and online submission of legal forms."

CALIFORNIA SELF-HELP WEB SITE COMING SOON

The California court system continues to move forward with its efforts to assist pro per litigants. One of the projects currently under way is the development of a self-help center for the California Courts Web site (www.court-info.ca.gov).

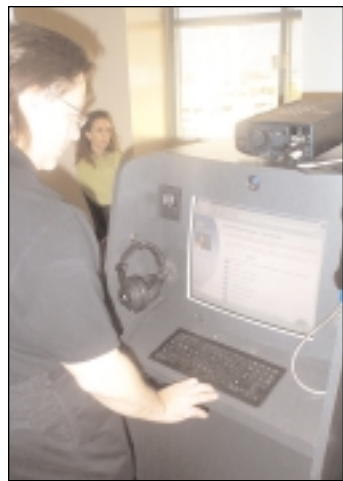
The self-help center, scheduled to go live in spring 2001, will provide pro per litigants with the greatest amount of official information and resources on California's court system offered via the Internet. The site will contain pages designed

specifically to help unrepresented litigants navigate the court system, including links to other Web sites that possess relevant material.

Users of the site will be able to find out about free and low-cost legal assistance, alternative dispute resolution, bringing a lawsuit or filling out court forms, and locating additional resources. It will also offer information regarding specific areas of the law, including but not limited to family law, domestic violence, traffic law, small claims court, juvenile law, guardianship/conservatorship, elder law, landlord-tenant issues, immigration law, and workers' compensation.

"Our goal is to provide a complete and reliable resource for pro pers and the courts," says Bonnie Hough, a senior attorney in the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (Administrative Office of the Courts) and one of the project leaders in the development of the self-help site. "Our hope is that it will ease the burden on unrepresented litigants and staff."

● For more information about I-CAN, contact Carole Levitzky, Superior Court of Orange County, 213-834-7623. For more information about the self-help center on the California Courts Web site, contact Bonnie Hough, 415-865-7668, e-mail: bonnie.hough@jud.ca.gov. ■



The Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN) system, located at the Lamoreaux Justice Center in Orange, provides the latest in self-help legal information to Orange County residents. Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Orange County

NCSC Reports on State Court Trends

The 1999–2000 edition of the *Report on Trends in the State Courts*, the most recent trends report prepared by the Knowledge Management Office of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), details current trends and "what to watch" in the field of judicial administration. Following are highlights of the report.

CURRENT TRENDS

Court Technology

- Courts are placing greater importance on electronic documents, filing, signatures, noticing, and public access.
- Internet access to public records is the hottest technology issue in the courts today, followed closely by the use of the Internet to file electronic court documents.
- Courts are taking advantage of knowledge management and data warehousing and have realized the need for a standard for effective electronic communication.
- Many courts are enhancing their customer service for pro se litigants by offering forms, instructions, and information via the Internet.
- Courts are continuing to explore new court reporting techniques, including digital audio, real-time transcription, and voice recognition technologies.

Therapeutic Jurisprudence

- Courts are increasing their use of therapeutic jurisprudence (also known as therapeutic justice), which is expanding the roles of judges and court services.
- Judges are becoming more involved with defendants, rewarding success and penalizing failure in specialty drug and domestic violence courts.

Specialization and Consolidation in State Courts

Two trends seem to contradict each other: more states are consolidating their trial courts, and at the same time an increasing number of specialized courts deal with particular types of cases or legal issues.

Batterers' Programs Standards and Legislation

Intervention programs for domestic violence perpetrators have increased over the last 20 years, and recently the trend has been for states to develop standards that outline how such intervention should be implemented.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is literally becoming part of the court as the growing use of ADR processes, particularly mediation, has led to a need for more space in courthouse facilities.

WHAT TO WATCH

Enforcement of Protection Orders

To help implement a provision of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) requiring every jurisdiction in the United States to recognize and enforce valid protection orders (full faith and credit) across state and tribal lines, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws is developing a uniform law on interstate recognition and enforcement of domestic violence orders.

The ADA: Providing Auxiliary Aids to Spectators

In the past several years, a particularly gray area of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has emerged: must courts provide auxiliary aids or sign language interpreters to court spectators? To respond to this question and related inquiries from courts, and to alleviate the growing number of complaints lodged against courts, the NCSC has solicited and received a written statement from the Department of Justice (DOJ) presenting the legal basis for DOJ's interpretation of the legislation on this issue and giving specific suggestions for implementation.

Judicial Election Reform

Judicial election reform is becoming more controversial, and election states face unprecedented scrutiny that challenges state judicial leaders to address judicial electoral reform and concerns about judicial independence.

Lawyers and Multidisciplinary Practice

Recently, business developments have raised questions about whether multidisciplinary practice (MDP) rules are necessary. In response, the American Bar Association (ABA) created a Commission on MDP to formulate arguments in favor of loosening MDP restrictions. However, on July 11, 2000, the ABA voted to maintain its position that lawyers should not be permitted to share fees with nonlawyers and that nonlawyers should not be permitted to own or control entities that practice law, effectively rejecting MDP.

Multilingual Juries

Do jurors have the right to interpreters? Recently, New Mexico's Supreme Court, on the basis of that state's constitution, required courts to provide English language interpreters for non-English speakers who are otherwise qualified to serve on a jury.

24-Hour Courts

Online public information, "ask-a-judge," e-filing, and submission of electronic forms and documents are making their respective debuts, along with virtual court tours, real-time webcasts of live town hall meetings between courts and communities, and online payment of traffic fines and fees.

Guardianship Mediation

With an aging population and a trend toward mediation, one would expect an increase in guardianship mediation; however, it is just now emerging as an option for many probate courts.

Science and the Justice System

DNA evidence has revealed its considerable power both to convict and to exonerate, but it has also raised significant questions about how late in the criminal justice process one should be able to introduce evidence and about the integrity of that process in the first place.

● For more information or copies of the full report, contact the NCSC Knowledge Management Office at 800-616-6164 or visit its Web site at www.ncsc.dni.us/is/product2.htm.

Kleps Awards Honor Court Programs

At its December 15 meeting, the Judicial Council announced the recipients of the 2000 Ralph N. Kleps Awards for Improvement in Judicial Administration. The winners were selected from a field of 46 nominations by the California Judicial Administration Conference (CJAC) Planning Committee. Awards will be formally presented at that conference, which takes place January 31 through February 2 in San Diego.

The annual awards are given in five categories divided according to the number of authorized judicial positions (AJPs) in the county. They were created in 1991 in honor of Ralph N. Kleps, the first administrative director of the California courts. They recognize and honor the contributions made by individual courts to the administration of justice.

Programs nominated for Kleps awards are judged on the following criteria. (1) The program improves the administration of the courts and reflects the intent of at least one of the goals of the Judicial Council Strategic Plan (access, fairness, and diversity; independence and accountability; modernization of management and administration; quality of justice and service to the public; education; and technology). (2) The activity is innovative. (3) The program is transferable to other courts. (4) The program has been in operation for at least one year.

Descriptions of the winning programs follow.

2000 KLEPS AWARD WINNERS

Category 1—Counties With 0 to 4.9 AJPs

Up Close and Personal With Division Six Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Six (Ventura)

Up Close and Personal With Division Six is a program for outreach to local high schools that was instituted in 1996. The court selects a criminal case from its calendar and sends the schools copies of the briefs for the students to read and analyze. The students are then invited to hear the lawyers argue the case. Following oral argument, students participate in a question-and-answer session with the lawyers. Once the opinion is filed, a copy is sent to the participating students so that they and their instructor can discuss the issues involved in the decision. The students also receive a tour of the courthouse and have an opportunity to visit with each of the justices.

● Contact: Paul T. McGill, Assistant Clerk/Administrator, 805-641-4711



The Up Close and Personal With Division Six program gives students from Camarillo High School a firsthand look at the appellate process. Students gathered in the chambers of Presiding Justice Arthur Gilbert (center) of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, accompanied by their teacher, Jim Steele (bottom right). Photo: Courtesy of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District

Category 2—Counties With 5.0 to 14.9 AJPs

Reality Check Superior Court of Butte County

Concerned about the rising numbers of young adults involved in alcohol-related incidents, the court developed Reality Check. This interactive program, a collaboration of the Superior Court of Butte County, Butte County Department of Behavioral Health, and Enloe Medical Center, is an alternative sentence program for young adults who are first-time alcohol offenders. The offenders are given firsthand exposure to the serious, often deadly results of alcohol abuse. Offenders are required to visit the Enloe Hospital emergency room and intensive care unit; the Jesus Center, a food program for homeless individuals; and Skyway House, a substance abuse recovery facility. The program is designed to prompt young adults to realize and acknowledge the severe consequences of alcohol abuse, including homelessness, serious medical trauma, and even death.

● Contact: Judge Darrell W. Stevens, 530-895-6502

Category 3—Counties With 15 to 50 AJPs

Mobile Self-Help Center Superior Court of Ventura County

The Ventura County court acquired its Mobile Self-Help Center to meet the needs of community members who have difficulty getting to the Self-Help Legal Access (SHLA) Center and the Family Law Clinic. The Mobile Self-Help Center provides the same information, educational materials, and referrals to nonprofit agencies and organizations as do those centers, but it does so in the form of a bookmobile-like 35-foot, custom-built motor home. The Mobile Self-Help Center travels around the county on an established schedule, visiting communities that are geographically remote from the courthouse. It is also used to participate in educational forums in response to special requests from schools, health care agencies, and community-based law enforcement programs.

● Contact: Sheila Gonzalez, Executive Officer, 805-654-2965



The Superior Court of Ventura County's Mobile Self-Help Center, a bookmobile-like 35-foot, custom-built motor home, provides information, educational materials, and referrals to nonprofit agencies for community members who have difficulty traveling to the courthouse. Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Ventura County

Keep Kids In School (KKIS) Superior Court of Fresno County

Fresno County's Keep Kids In School (KKIS) program is an aggressive intervention program that targets truant youth, who, by definition, are more likely to drop out of school. Truancy has been recognized as a strong indicator of tendencies toward drug use and violent behavior. Since the problem of chronic truancy is not just a school issue or a court issue but a community issue, the program solicits the expertise and support of the Superior Court of Fresno County, the Fresno County Volunteer Bureau, the District Attorney's Office, the Probation Department, attorneys willing to provide pro bono services, Boys and Girls Clubs, Comprehensive Youth Services, Target Stores, and St. Agnes Medical Center's Footsteps program. This collaboration, combined with enforcement and accountability, has enabled KKIS to combat school truancy and keep schools safer.

● Contact: Tamara L. Beard, Executive Officer, 559-488-1825

Jury Duty Compliance Program Superior Court of San Joaquin County

The Jury Duty Compliance Program is designed to effectuate compliance with the civic section of jury service and to provide litigants with an accurate cross-section of the community from which to select jurors for trial. Additionally, delinquent jurors are provided with information about the importance of jury service and information about the county's one-day/one-trial rule. Rather than punish delinquent jurors, the program focuses on compliance. From June 1, 1999, through May 31, 2000, 8,649 of the 14,831 people who failed to respond to summonses for jury service in the Stockton branch of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County eventually fulfilled their jury service obligations. It is hypothesized that without the compliance program, the court would have never heard from these individuals.

● Contact: Jeanne Millsaps, Executive Officer, 209-468-8121

Category 4—Counties With 50 or More AJPs

Enhancement of Court Web Site—Electronic Commerce Superior Court of Alameda County

The Alameda County court developed and implemented a new design for its Web site that reflects a unified superior court and the expanding services and information being made available to the public online. The site was designed with the perspective of a court customer in mind and contains the kinds of helpful information that are

sought most frequently. Information is organized for easy access, and the site includes the e-commerce and interactive functions that are most in demand.

● **Contact:** Theresa Beltran, Assistant Executive Officer, 510-268-7602

Domestic Violence Training and Awareness Program
South Justice Center, Superior Court of Orange County

The South Justice Center of the Superior Court of Orange County, in concert with many other public agencies, is sponsoring the second annual Domestic Violence Training and Awareness Conference for elementary, junior high, and high school teachers, guidance counselors, and psychologists in surrounding school districts. Attorney General Bill Lockyer is the keynote speaker, and local and national experts will present state-of-the-art information to teachers, who are often the first people to whom children from a violent household reach out for help. The program will provide opportunities for community referrals, as well as material and information to be passed on to students.

The goal of the conference is to educate teachers, counselors, and other important school contacts about family violence and its effects on children. This includes training them to identify early warning signs, discuss teen dating violence, establish peer support groups for youths, and obtain county support for the schools' programs.

● Contact: Caroline Swift, Manager, Administrative Services,
949-249-5138

Sara Berman Adoption Saturdays
Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Sara Berman Adoption Saturdays evolved as a response to the Los Angeles County courts' growing backlog of incomplete adoptions (in some cases, children awaited adoptions for years). Through Adoption Saturdays, completions of adoptions have increased at an unprecedented rate. Volunteer services from judges and attorneys are a key to the program's success. Pro bono attorneys assist prospective parents with adoption procedures and paperwork, which mitigates much of the delay associated with the process. Finally, the Adoption Saturdays constitute a decisive court action to address a persistent community issue.

● **Contact:** John A. Clarke, Executive Officer, 213-974-5401



Volunteer services from Los Angeles County judges and attorneys are a key to the success of Sara Berman Adoption Saturdays, which evolved as a response to the courts' growing backlog of incomplete adoptions. *Photo: Jason Doiy*

**Court-Community Outreach and Education Through
Countywide Public Service Announcements
*Superior Court of San Bernardino County***

A series of nine one-minute public service announcements (PSAs) has been produced as part of a court-community education and outreach package that informs the residents of the county about court processes. The project was designed to answer the most commonly asked questions about the court. The PSAs address universal needs of the community; feature the most-used services; and educate the public about court services, rules, and procedures. The topics include jury service, family court services, the Family Law Facilitation Center, and general courthouse rules. The PSAs have been distributed county-wide and are now being aired on 12 community-access television stations.

● Contact: Martie Parsley, Coordinator, Special Projects, 909-387-6414

Family Violence Solutions Center
Superior Court of San Diego County

The Family Violence Solutions Center offers to victims, batterers, and their children, in one location, a unique collection of support services and consistent judicial oversight. The center pulls together resources from the city attorney, mediators, public defenders, volunteer lawyers, and others. A recent study showed that cases are disposed of much earlier (cases settled at arraignment increased from 2 percent to 53 percent), and batterers are enrolled in domestic violence recovery programs in 23 days rather than 90 (a 75 percent reduction).

● **Contact:** Stephen Thunberg, Executive Officer, 619-615-6393

Bagel Time

Superior Court of Riverside County

Several court supervisors and managers in Riverside County discussed the fact that they wanted more opportunities to develop and practice public speaking and presentation skills. The result was Bagel (*brilliant, awesome, goal-oriented, energetic leaders*) Time. Modeled after the international public speaking group Toastmasters, Bagel Time is a regular, informal opportunity for court staff members to practice public speaking and polish their presentation skills. The group meets once a month during the lunch hour. Membership in Bagel Time is open to staff members at all levels.

● Contact: Diane Gray, Court Administrative Services Manager,
909-955-5553



Participants in the Superior Court of Riverside County's Bagel Time program work to improve their public speaking and presentation skills. (Front row, seated) Connie Pickering, Norma Richards, Peggy Spencer, Merili Johnston. (Second row) Pamela Payne, Kelli Conroy, Linda Smith, Alma Galvan, Tracy Harper, Lucy Sylvester, Lynne Vokac, Mary Tripp, Diane Simpson-Howard, Naomi Gaines, Trisha Carrasco, Linda Toller, Toni Ternes, Carol Gerster. (Third row) Irene McCullough, Debra Shortlidge, Pete Nielsen, Debra Stapleton, Rosalind Green, LaTrissa Franklin, Donnette Campbell, Jill Arnold, David Cope, John Moore, Kathy Williams. (Fourth row) Sue Martin, Kyra Dickerson, Alex Carrillo. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Riverside County*

Category 5—Cross-County Projects That Involve Two or More Counties Working in Collaboration on a Single Program

Electronic Reporter's Transcripts on Appeal
Court of Appeal, First Appellate District

To reduce the time needed to review records on appeal, reporter's transcripts on appeal are captured in an electronic, searchable format and made available to court staff. In addition to saving time, the project reduces the costs of storing archived records by replacing paper documents with electronic transcripts.

● **Contact:** Ron Barrow, Clerk of the Court, 415-865-7263

The following court programs were not selected for Kleps awards but did receive special recognition from the planning committee.

Category 2

Family Court Children's Fund
Superior Court of Yolo County

The Family Court Children's Fund was established in 1998 when Judge Donna M. Petre received a \$10,000 award from the Foundation for Improvement of Justice, Inc. The purpose of the fund is to help Yolo County children who are at risk physically and/or psychologically and whose needs cannot be met through existing resources. Frequently, these children have become involved with the court system as a result of parental abuse, violence, or other criminality. The Family Court Children's Fund enables the court to increase public trust and improve services to children.

Category 3

Show Me-JBSIS-Compliant Case Management System
Superior Court of San Joaquin County

Show Me is the case management system used by the Superior Court of San Joaquin County to process family law, unlimited civil, probate, mental health, and juvenile dependency cases. It is the first case management system in California to be certified for Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS) compliance in the areas of family law, unlimited civil, and juvenile dependency cases. A graphic user interface facilitates the posting of not only data required by JBSIS but all case events and filed documents. This, in turn, enables court staff to respond quickly to requests for information. Reports generated by the system make it easier for court administrators and judges to find out if backlogs are developing and where redeployment of staff would make an impact.

● For more information on the Kleps awards, contact Shawn Landry, 415-865-7628, e-mail: shawn.landry@jud.ca.gov. ■